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RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0262  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHOND/DIR ONDCP WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
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RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
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STATE OPS NIACT FOR SCA, INL, EUR FRONT OFFICES AT OOB  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
OSD FOR KIMMITT  
ONDCP FOR DIRECTOR  
STATE FOR INL/AP, INL/FO, AND INR  
CIA FOR CNC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2017  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: AFGHAN ERADICATION FORCE COMES UNDER HOSTILE FIRE

REF: A. KABUL 1219  
[1](#)B. KABUL 1426

Classified By: NAS Director Elizabeth Richard for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: The U.S.-funded Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) came under hostile fire twice on April 29 during its deployment in Uruzgan province. The first time came at the beginning of the day when the AEF was initiating its operations. On the way back to base, the AEF encountered an ambush necessitating QRF response from the Dutch-led Task Force Uruzgan. INL Air Wing grounded two Huey helicopters due to damage from small arms fire. The AEF captured one combatant who is at the FOB and will be turned over to Task Force Uruzgan. Several Afghan members of the AEF were wounded, but there were no fatalities. The AEF will not conduct eradication on April 30 as we assess their capabilities to continue their mission. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C/NF) At 1045 on April 29, the U.S.-funded Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) came under fire as it started eradication activities in an area approximately 12 kilometers WSW of Tarin Kot in Uruzgan province. The AEF contingent in the field consisted of 100 AEF officers, 80 other Ministry of Interior police officers, 15 DynCorp contractors, one INL officer, and two journalists. The initial attack consisted of small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. The AEF was able to extricate itself from the attack and started to return to base.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) While returning to their FOB, the AEF encountered a complex, coordinated ambush at 1230. INL Air Wing provided heavy suppressing fire, and two helicopters received significant damage due to small arms fire and are now grounded at the PRT. The AEF requested QRF support from the Netherlands' Task Force Uruzgan (TFU), who responded within 20 minutes with Apache attack helicopters. The AEF managed to depart the ambush point prior to the Apaches' arrival, but the ISAF helicopters destroyed, at the AEF's request, two abandoned vehicles with communications equipment that were stranded at a river crossing.

14. (C/NF) Several (exact number unknown) Afghans received wounds due to hostile fire, and INL Air Wing transported the casualties to the PRT for medical care. Some of the wounds were serious and required surgery. There were no fatalities from the AEF, and we do not have information regarding casualties or fatalities among the attackers. The AEF captured one attacker whom they transported back to their base. TFU expressed interest in taking possession of the detained attacker and transporting him to the PRT for interrogation.

15. (C/NF) COMMENT: While Dutch military and civilian officials at the PRT in Tarin Kot have long voiced their discomfort about the AEF's operations (reftels), they did not let their disagreement affect their responsiveness. Task Force Uruzgan provided immediate assistance when the AEF liaison officers embedded at the PRT made their initial request, and the Dutch Embassy in Kabul has informed us that they were pleased with the communications throughout the day between the PRT and the AEF. We are now evaluating our next steps and will assess the AEF's capability to continue operations in Uruzgan. Our initial impulse is to carry on with the operation and counter any speculation that the AEF can be easily run out of town. The AEF will stand down operations on April 30 as we make this assessment in coordination with our Afghan partners. We expect, although have not yet received, pressure from Dutch diplomatic and military contacts to end the Uruzgan operation and return to Kabul. END COMMENT  
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